

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
CORPUS CHRISTI DIVISION

JAMES COY MIDDLETON, §  
§  
v. § C.A. NO. C-09-135  
§  
NATHANIEL QUARTERMAN. §

**ORDER DENYING APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL**

Petitioner is an inmate in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Correctional Institutions Division, and is currently incarcerated at the Garza East Unit in Beeville, Texas. Proceeding pro se, he filed a habeas petition pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254. (D.E. 1). Pending is his motion for the appointment of counsel. (D.E. 7).

There is no constitutional right to counsel in federal habeas proceedings. Wright v. West, 505 U.S. 277, 293 (1992) (Constitution “guarantees no right to counsel on habeas”); see also Elizalde v. Dretke, 362 F.3d 323, 329 (5th Cir. 2004) (same); Johnson v. Hargett, 978 F.2d 855, 859 (5th Cir. 1992) (same). Rule 8(c) of the Rules Governing § 2254 Cases requires that counsel be appointed if the habeas petition raises issues that mandate an evidentiary hearing. Here, his request for counsel is premature because at this stage in his case there are no factual issues requiring an evidentiary hearing. Indeed, respondent has not yet filed an answer to the petition.

Counsel will be assigned sua sponte if there are issues that mandate an evidentiary hearing be held. Moreover, the Court may appoint counsel if discovery is ordered and there are issues necessitating the assignment of counsel. See Rule 6(a) of the Rules Governing § 2254 Cases; Thomas v. Scott, 47 F.3d 713, 715 n.1 (5th Cir. 1995).

It is therefore ORDERED that petitioner's motion for the appointment of counsel, (D.E. 7), be DENIED without prejudice.

ORDERED this 7th day of July 2008.



BRIAN L. OWSLEY  
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE